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OCI No. 2862/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
8 October 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Insurgency in Laos, South Vietnam, Somali Republic, and Iraq

1. Laos

A recent build-up of Communist strength in Xieng Khouang Province may presage new military initiatives against right-wing and neutralist forces positioned there. There are numerous reports of heavy westbound truck traffic on Route 7 during the last half of September, including both supplies and troops. The focus of activity is in the Ban Ban area east of the Plaine des Jarres, where mixed Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces reportedly are gathering in large numbers.

While some of this movement probably represents the delivery of a backlog of supplies following the reopening of Route 7, the reported troop build-up suggests that the Communists are preparing for new offensive operations. Meo defense forces in the Ban Ban area, whose presence is a continuing threat to Communist supply lines, may be an immediate primary target as well as neutralist positions in the Plaine des Jarres.

2. South Vietnam

The Viet Cong have continued to sustain the high level of activity they began five weeks ago. This contrasts with the pattern of the past year, during which Viet Cong actions have been characterized by one to two weeks of intensified activity followed by a decline of four to five weeks. However, there have been periods in other years when the Viet Cong sustained a high level of military operations over an extended period of time.

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Another reported infiltration into South Vietnam of an organized Viet Cong unit contrasts with the usual pattern of cadre infiltration. The unit, reported by a Viet Cong prisoner captured by government forces, consisted of five officers and 102 men, departed North Vietnam in January, and is now engaged in security duties at a regimental headquarters in the northern part of the country.

3. Somali Republic

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Mogadiscio's resumption of Amharic broadcasts attacking the Ethiopian Emperor has provoked an official protest from Addis Ababa and a warning that continuation of such broadcasts could contribute to a deterioration of Ethiopian-Somali relations.

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4. Iraq

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Syria has moved some forces across the border into Iraq. Evidently more Syrian troops are to move soon, and Syrian troop deployment in Iraq may eventually total between 3,000-5,000. Most of these forces probably will be stationed in the north, thereby freeing Iraqi support forces which can then be used in front-line fighting. There has been some evidence that the Iraqi Army has been experiencing a shortage of both troops and officers as the fighting has continued. The Iraqis may also be planning a "final" push against the Kurds before late October rains bring heavy fighting to a halt, but firm evidence of such a move has not yet developed.

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